

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8335

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13497

CALCUTTA 2261 FOLLOWS. SENT TO NEW DELHI FOR ACTION ON 13 SEP 76.
BEING RPTD FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 2261

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PINT, IN

SUBJ: APPOINTMENT OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN INDIA

1. IN RESPONSE TO INVITATION, CONOFF AND WIFE MADE SOCIAL
CALL ON CARDINAL PICACHY EVENING SEP 19. DURING COURSE OF
LONG CONVERSATION CARDINAL MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. CARDINAL PICACHY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER WHAT HE FELT WAS
INCREASED INTERFERENCE IN CHURCH AFFAIRS BY THE GOVERNMENT
OF INDIA. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS, SINCE
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS ELEVATION TO THE RANK OF CARDINAL,
REQUESTED THAT IN THE FUTURE IT BE "CONSULTED" REGARDING ANY
APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS IN INDIA. IN THE PAST, IT WAS THE
VATICAN'S PRACTICE ONLY TO HAVE THE PAPAL NUNCIO "NOTIFY"
THE GOVERNMENT OF SUCH APPOINTMENTS, FOLLOWING WHICH ALL
INDIA RADIO ANNOUNCED THEM. THE CARDINAL REMARKED THAT "CON-
SULTATION" IMPLIED THE POWER OF VETO BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
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INDIA. AT PRESENT THE GOI HAS BEEN "NOTIFIED" OF TEN APPOINT-

MENTS, INCLUDING THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF BOMBAY BUT NONE HAS YET BEEN ANNOUNCED BY ALL INDIA RADIO. ALL THE APPOINTMENTS ARE BEING HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW NUNCIO WHO IS EXPECTED TO BE CARRYING INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE VATICAN.

3. BEYOND THIS IMMEDIATE DISAGREEMENT WITH THE GOI, IN ADDITION TO CONTROVERSY OVER COMPULSORY STERILIZATION, CARDINAL PICACHY SAYS THAT CERTAIN PRIESTS, ADIED AND ABETTED BY UNNAMED GOI FIGURES, WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A "NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH" WITH NO RPT NO TIES WITH THE VATICAN. HE SAYS THIS MOVEMENT HAS NOT GENERATED ANY GREAT ENTHUSIASM AMONG THE CLERGY BUT HE FEARS THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT SECURES THE RIGHT OF IMPLIED VETO OVER APPOINTMENTS THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH" WOULD BE THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP IN MAKING THE CHURCH SUBMISSIVE TO THE GOI.

3. COMMENT: WE ARE TOLD THAT MRS. GANDHI WAS NOT PLEASED OVER PICACHY'S ELEVATION TO CARDINAL, AND THE GOI HAS NO DOUBT NOT BEEN HAPPY OVER HIS RESISTANCE TO FAMILY PLANNING. ONE GETS THE IMPRESSION THAT THE CARDINAL WOULD NOT SHRINK FROM A FIGHT IF THE GOI WERE TO SEEK A SHOWDOWN EITHER REGARDING THE AUTONOMY OF THE CHURCH OR ON BIRTH CONTROL.
KORN

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